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# In Our Terribleness

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“IN OUR TERRIBLENESS”  
(a LeRoi Jones title)

I

We are not like large bugs  
bumping into each other in mid-air.  
You are noted for the way  
your beard and moustache  
set off the shine of your lips and teeth.  
Someone has noticed you being  
gentle with a young child,  
someone has observed that you  
joined a flagellant society  
the year before we all met  
and that you became a Penitente then too.  
Someone has noted that you  
change your sex from day to day  
depending on who you are with.  
There is an entire book on this subject.  
Ah! ah! your red hair shining  
and oh! I despair of finding  
a true authority on the subject of you  
although some say I qualify.  
Let me begin all of this now.  
You are not a winged insect  
who passes me in mid-air  
on the way to some opposite destinations.

II

Identification Manual, Page 241, *ibid.*  
This is a way usually used. This is a  
way often found. This is. How. To.  
The..... is often seen flying past  
on the way to a food source; it's known  
to favour the blood of freshly killed.  
It uses the telephone as a prime weapon.  
It uses the postal service secondarily.

III

Translation Manual, Page 241, *ibid.*  
It speaks only of itself. It speaks  
in hushed and reverential tones only.  
Its voice is heard throughout the land.

It is not a turtle though the shell is  
such that it can and does withdraw.  
The inscription inside the shell reads.  
The musical notes coming from within  
have been annotated and found to read.  
In its working habits it's said to.  
All surviving records indicate that.  
When the last specimen was alive, it.  
At the last, the sounds most resembled.

*Carol Bergé*

#### AN ALTERCATION RECTIFIED

Hello again! And let me start  
with an apology. Last night I called  
you a dotard, a yellow bole on a fuzzy  
unripe tree. I take it back. I only meant  
to touch your breast unnoticed by the  
dormant tramps in the shallows of your mind.  
As it happened, you welcomed my hand but  
looked askance at the doubtful compliment I  
cast your way. And rightly so. Two things  
should immediately occur to you from this incident.  
One: I am frightfully timid, or rather, have  
a cozeningly clownish fright of the direct  
approach, which, Roman statesmen tell us, is the best.  
More about this later. And two: I am an  
amphibiously libidinous Venetian desperado,  
out to get into your cunt. Don't take this  
amiss. It is neither a compliment nor meant  
to be one, although I can't say it is a  
detraction either. Simply: the meeting of two  
minds (and this has proved to be our case)  
requires that after the passage of a certain length  
of time, such as four breakfasts, and a mid-  
night skinny dip in your grandmother's duck pond,  
there should be a reasonable and deliberate  
exploration of the senses. I am sure you will  
agree, in principle at least.